C&M VOL. 18

COVERS ATTACK, COMPOSITE, ADVERSARY, TRAINING, TEST & EVALUATION AND SPECIAL PURPOSE UNITS

COLORS & MARKINGS OF

COLORFUL U.S. NAVY A-4 SKYHAWKS

A DETAIL & SCALE AVIATION PUBLICATION

Bert Kinzey and Ray Leader

THE COLORS & MARKINGS SERIES

The Colors & Markings Series has been designed to provide an ongoing affordable series of publications covering the paint schemes, squadron markings, special insignias, and nose art carried by many of the most important aircraft in aviation history.

Most books in this series will have sixty-four pages, and approximately one-quarter of the pictures will usually be in color. When older aircraft are presented, and extensive color coverage is not available, there will be less color, but more black and white photographs. Except for the front cover, no artist paintings will be used to show color, since these are notorious for having errors. When color photographs are not available, captions for the black and white photos will extensively describe the colors involved. We believe this will provide more accurate information than artists' renditions. But in most cases, there will be approximately 50 color photographs for a price under twelve dollars. Additionally, there will usually be at least one-hundred more black and white photographs. We will make it our policy to keep the photographs large so that the markings show clearly. Dates that the photographs were taken will often be included so that the reader will know the time frame for which the markings were appropriate.

Special volumes in this series will be released approximately once a year. These special volumes will be larger and will contain additional color.

The service life of each aircraft will dictate the specific format of the book. In some cases the book may cover a specific time frame or a given numbered air force. The active Air Force units that operated the aircraft may be the focus of one book, while Air National Guard units will be featured in another. In short, the format and scope of each book will be narrowed so that good coverage can be presented. However, it must be noted that it is impossible to provide definitive, much less complete, coverage of a given aircraft in a sixty-four page book. To do so is not our goal, but we do intend to provide as extensive coverage as possible in a continuing softbound series, and offered at a price even the reader on a budget can afford. In order to include as many photographs as possible, no extensive narrative will be included to cover the developmental or operational history of the aircraft. This is usually better provided in books designed primarily to present such information. This series will have only a brief introduction to explain the basic mission of the aircraft and the scope and format used for that particular book. It will be the captions for the photographs that will tell the story of the aircraft and its markings. To as great an extent as possible, photos that have not been published before will be used.

We have been fortunate to receive the cooperation and assistance from some of the best known aviation photographers in the world who have offered photos from their extensive collections for this series. With their help, we believe the Colors & Markings Series will be the best of its kind available anywhere.

THE AUTHORS

Bert Kinzey is an aviation writer who is best known for his "Detail & Scale" series which he created to cover the details of military aircraft. He has also written numerous magazine articles as well as manuals for the Department of the Army. He has served in the Army as an Air Defense Artillery Officer, during which time he commanded a Hawk guided missile battery in Korea, and later wrote and taught classes on airpower at the Army Air Defense School. As a civilian he served with the Army as a "subject matter expert" on the Soviet air threat, but now has turned his attention to full time writing. He is an avid aviation photographer and modeler, and is a member of the Aviation and Space Writers Association, the International Plastic Modelers Society, and the American Historical Society. He is also President of Detail & Scale, Inc.

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Front cover: One of VA-212's A-4Fs, 154973, is shown here on the flight deck of USS HANCOCK, CVA-19, on August 19, 1973. One of the A-4's strong points was that it could operate effectively from the smaller ESSEX class carriers like HANCOCK, as well as from the larger MIDWAY class and the subsequent classes of super carriers. (Nagakubo)

Rear cover top: Two TA-4Js, 158094 and 158099, are positioned on the starboard elevator aboard USS LEXINGTON during flight operations in June 1989. These Skyhawks are painted in the standard training paint scheme of overall white with red wing, nose, and tail panels. These particular aircraft belong to VT-7 which is a part of CARRIER TRAINING WING ONE (CTW-1). (Kinzey)

Rear cover bottom: A more unusual scheme for the two-seat Skyhawk is exemplified by this TA-4J from VC-1. It is painted overall white, but has a beautiful multi-colored tail marking and blue fuselage band containing squadron markings. This TA-4J, 155081, is the commander's aircraft for the unit, and it was photographed in January 1976. (Grove)

INTRODUCTION

The light gull gray over white scheme was the "standard" for most single seat A-4s during their operational life, and is illustrated on this A-4E which is assigned to VC-5. Uppersurfaces and sides were light gull gray, while the undersides and control surfaces were white. Red was used on the area under the leading edge slats, and was also used to outline the landing gear doors. Colorful markings often covered most or all of the vertical tail and rudder as shown here. This use of color on an attractive paint scheme combined with the Skyhawk's appealing lines to make it one of the most beautiful military aircraft in aviation history. This photograph was taken at Kadena AB on August 17, 1977. Additional Skyhawks in VC-5's markings can be found on page 31. *(Nishimora)*

The diminutive A-4 Skyhawk has long been one of the favorites among aviation enthusiasts throughout the free world. There are several factors that have contributed to the "Scooter's" popularity, not the least of which is the attractive lines of its compact airframe. It has enjoyed high visibility because of its long service life in the U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps, its extensive use in the war in Vietnam, and the fact that it has been exported to many foreign nations. The A-4 has been produced in numerous variants of both the single and two-seat varieties, and has been used to perform many different roles and support functions in addition to being an attack aircraft. TA-4Fs and TA-4Js have long been the primary advanced jet trainer for both the Navy and Marines. Other Skyhawks have been used as electronic warfare aircraft, to evaluate weapons and flight systems, and as forward air controllers. But the role which has received the most publicity is that of playing the part of an adversary aircraft. A-4s have been used to simulate potential enemy aircraft against which pilots in the Navy and Marines could train. In spite of the fact that the Skyhawk is a subsonic aircraft with no afterburner, its maneuverability and good flying qualities have made it a formidable adversary for the best jet fighters in the inventory. Stripped down of all unnecessary equipment, its thrust-to-weight ratio is quite impressive, and has allowed the Skyhawk to hold its own against the much more powerful fighters.

But one of the most important factors contributing to the Skyhawk's popularity is that it has been adorned in some of the most colorful and diverse markings seen on any combat aircraft. Before the changeover to today's colorless tactical schemes, Skyhawks flew training missions, dropped bombs and fired rockets in Vietnam, and went one-on-one with Navy and Marine fighters in some of the most intensive dissimilar air combat training ever conducted. And they did it all wearing splashes of color that were often the most eye-catching on any aircraft in the sky, on the ramp, or aboard the carriers.

During most of the Skyhawk's service life, single-seat A-4s assigned to attack and composite squadrons were usually painted in the light gull gray (26440) over white (27875) paint scheme. Uppersurfaces and sides of

The overall white paint scheme was the most common used on two-seat variants of the Skyhawk within the U.S. Navy. Even some of the TA-4s that were assigned to attack and composite squadrons were painted overall white, although the same unit's single-seaters wore the gray over white scheme. Such an example is illustrated on TA-4J, 153479, while it was assigned to VC-13. The nose and tail markings, and the ***SAINTS*** *on the side of the fuselage are a medium blue. More of VC-13's aircraft are illustrated on page 37. (Lock)*

the aircraft were painted in the light gull gray color, while the undersurfaces, the tops and bottoms of the ailerons and elevators, and both sides of the rudder were painted white. The area under the slats and the insides of the flaps were painted red (21105). This standard paint scheme was also used on most Skyhawks assigned to test and evaluation units. It was also used on some of the two-seat variants assigned to the attack, composite, and other units. However, many of these two-seaters were painted in the overall white scheme that was more commonly used in the training squadrons. But it was the light gull gray over white scheme that was the norm and the standard in the attack and composite squadrons until the tactical scheme replaced them. By that time, the A-4 had all but disappeared from these squadrons in the Navy.

TA-4Fs and TA-4Js assigned to the training squadrons were painted overall white with red nose and wing panels. Often, the vertical tail was also red. This was not the same insignia red used under the slats and in the national insignia. It had more orange in it, and there was a noticeable difference between these two reds. On some aircraft, blues, greens, and yellows were used on the nose, tail, and to a lesser extent, the wing panels of these aircraft. Although the Skyhawk has now disappeared from the Navy's attack squadrons, large numbers of the two-seaters remain in use in these training squadrons.

The most unusual paint schemes ever applied to Skyhawks were those used by the adversary squadrons. Simulating the camouflage colors and patterns used by nations that are potential enemies of the United States, these schemes ranged from the very subdued with low visibility markings to many that were very colorful. Blues, greens, grays, browns, tans, and other colors were mixed together in various patterns that were often as colorful as they were unusual.

This volume in the Colors & Markings Series takes a look at these colorful paint schemes and markings as used on Skyhawks assigned to units in the U.S. Navy. Unlike most books in this series, this volume does not cover every Navy unit that has flown the Skyhawk, but very few have been left out. In fact, markings used by seventy-six different units are illustrated, making this the most extensive coverage of Navy Skyhawk markings

Typical Training Command markings are shown here. This view from above shows the markings on the uppersurfaces of the wings to good effect. Note the ***A*** *tail code stencilled in black within the red area on the right wing, and the* ***700*** *modex on the white aileron. The black walkway, which is on both wings, is also visible.*

(Kinzey)

Many A-4s assigned to adversary units were painted in colorful camouflage schemes that were often patterned after those used by potential enemy nations. Others were simply designed by the using squadron. A-4F, 154973, is shown here as it appeared in October 1984 while assigned to VA-127. Although most of the markings are in low-visibility colors, the blues and gray make for a colorful and attractive aircraft. The Soviet style nose number and red star on the tail add to the color and overall appearance of this adversary Skyhawk. (White)

ever contained in a single publication. Attack squadrons are covered first, and are followed by the composite units. Next are the "VF" fighter or adversary units, to include the Navy Fighter Weapons School "Top Gun," and these are followed by the training squadrons. Special purpose units come next, then come the A-4s assigned to Naval Air Stations (NAS). Test and evaluation units and a brief look at the Blue Angels and Flight Systems, Inc. round out our coverage. Numbered squadrons in each section are presented in numerical order.

On the pages that follow are the standard and non-standard colors and markings carried by Navy Skyhawks throughout many years of operational service. We have made an effort to include some of the most colorful and unusual schemes that were used on Skyhawks. Included are many A-4s in CAG markings, which are those aircraft in each squadron that are painted with additional and more colorful markings for the **C**ommander of the **A**ir **G**roup. A-4s flown by other commanders are also illustrated. We have also selected a number of Skyhawks with Bi-centennial schemes and markings that were used to help celebrate America's Bi-centennial year of 1976. Other special markings are also included. For the adversary units, we have chosen examples of the more colorful of these schemes, while avoiding those that were subdued and of the colorless tactical variety.

Providing such extensive coverage of Skyhawk markings over so many years would not have been possible without the help of a lot of people who have donated their photographs to Detail & Scale. Many aviation photographers contributed to this publication, and their names are listed on page two. It is because of their efforts and generosity that we are able to show so many different Skyhawks in such varied and colorful paint schemes and markings. Detail & Scale sincerely appreciates the assistance of each of them.

Although these beautiful paint schemes are but one of the factors that contributed to the Skyhawk's popularity, the photographs we have selected for this publication illustrate why they are perhaps a most significant factor.

VA-12 FLYING UBANGIS

VA-12's red and black markings were used on A-4B, 142711, which was photographed on September 10, 1960, aboard USS SHANGRI-LA, CVA-38. This was the squadron commander's aircraft as indicated by the modex that ends in 01 and the red and black bands on the fuselage. (MAP)

VA-15 VALIONS

Forty-five mission markers attest to "combat experience" of A-4B, 145013, after its return from a cruise with VA-15 aboard USS INTREPID, CVS-11. The badge on the tail is that of the Tonkin Gulf Yacht Club, while the squadron badge is located forward of the mission markers. (MAP)

LCDR Richard A. Moran, of VA-15, flew this A-4B while making his 300th arrested landing aboard INTREPID on July 17, 1966. Note the squadron's marking on the fuselage, and the arrangement of the modex and AK tail code on the upper right wing. (U.S. Navy)

After transitioning to the A-4C and being assigned to USS FORRESTAL, CVA-59, The Valion's markings looked like this. Both the squadron insignia and the badge for the Tonkin Gulf Yacht Club are on the fuselage. A red lightning bolt is on the tail, and passes through the AA tail code. (Flightleader)

VA-22 FIGHTING REDCOCKS

The Fighting Redcocks of VA-22 were also once assigned to INTREPID as indicated by that carrier's name on the fuselage of this A-4B. A red redcock is located on the fuselage, and is outlined in black. The fin cap is blue. (Stewart)

*A-4C, 148453, illustrates later markings used by VA-22. The squadron's designation is under **NAVY** on the fuselage, and the redcock is above the tail code. The fin cap is blue, as is the trim on the rudder. The fuselage band is also blue, and contains white stars. (MAP)*

After reassignment to the USS RANGER, CVA-61, a trio of VA-22's Skyhawks are readied for a mission over North Vietnam on December 12, 1967. The A-4 on the left is armed with Shrike anti-radiation missiles, while the other two carry 500-pound bombs. This high view reveals the markings on the tops of the wings. (U.S. Navy)

*A-4F, 155068, was photographed at NAS Lemoore in March 1969. By this time the carrier assignment had been changed again as indicated by **USS BON HOMME RICHARD** stencilled in black on the avionics hump. (Flightleader)*

VA-23 BLACK KNIGHTS

The Black Knights of VA-23 are represented by this Skyhawk that was photographed in late 1967. This is the CAG aircraft for the unit, and ***COMMANDER ATTACK CARRIER AIR WING NINETEEN*** *is lettered on either side of the unit's insignia on the fuselage. The trim on the rudder is multicolored for the CAG, and* ***USS TICONDEROGA*** *is stenciled in black on the electronics hump. (MAP)*

VA-34 BLUE BLASTERS

The A-4A was originally designated A4D-1, and one of these early Skyhawks is shown here about to launch from an ESSEX class carrier. The hood around the canopy, the fin cap, and the markings on the fuel tanks are blue. ***VA34*** *is lettered above the number on the vertical fin.*

(National Archives)

Later markings for the Blue Blasters are illustrated on A-4B, 144895, which was photographed on the flight deck of USS SARATOGA, CVA-60.

(Sides)

After transitioning to the A-4C, and embarking aboard USS FORRESTAL, the tail code was changed to ***AA,*** *and the fuselage marking was reduced in size. The insignia for the Tonkin Gulf Yacht Club can also be seen on the side of the fuselage, and indicates that VA-34 was aboard FORRESTAL for her deployment to Vietnam. However, this deployment lasted only a few days because of the tragic fire that occurred aboard the ship. (Flightleader)*

VA-36 ROAD RUNNERS

A-4C, 149569, from the Road Runners of VA-36 was among the first aircraft to launch into combat from a nuclear powered aircraft carrier. Note the mission markers under the roadrunner on the intake, and the carrier name ***USS ENTERPRISE*** *above* ***NAVY*** *on the fuselage. The ENTERPRISE, CVA(N)-65, was the first nuclear powered ship to engage in combat, and is the subject of volume 39 in the Detail & Scale Series of books. (Flightleader)*

VA-43 & VF-43 CHALLENGERS

TA-4J, 153671, was painted in the overall white scheme while assigned to the Challengers of VA-43. The nose and tail markings on this aircraft were medium blue. (Flightleader)

This TA-4F was also assigned to VA-43, but at a different time than the aircraft shown above. The same 300 modex is used, and ***COMMANDER FLEET AIR NORFOLK*** *is stencilled on the side of the fuselage.*

(Flightleader)

VA-43 was given an adversary mission and redesignated VF-43. This change can be noted in the unit's designation that is painted on the aft fuselage of this aircraft. The markings on the rudder are blue and white, and the tail code is black, shadowed in white.
(Flightleader)

Sporting a "triple nuts" modex and Bi-centennial markings, TA-4J, 154298, is very colorful. The unit insignia is on the nose, and ***1176-1976*** *is lettered in red and blue on the side of the fuselage.* *(Leslie)*

After assuming their role as the "bad guys," VF-43 painted their Skyhawks in typical camouflage patterns used by the adversary units. At left is an A-4E, and at right is a TA-4J that are painted in similar camouflage schemes of blues and grays. While this scheme itself is colorful, the markings are quite small and flat black to reduce visibility. The only color left is the squadron's badge on the vertical tail of each aircraft. *(Left Flightleader, right Grove)*

VA-45 & VF-45 BLACKBIRDS

Skyhawk squadrons were sometimes broken down into detachments and assigned to anti-submarine support carriers (CVS) to provide self-defense for these ships. A-4C, 149498, was assigned to Detachment II from VA-45, and is shown here aboard USS INTREPID, CVS-11. (MAP)

This is the right side of another one of VA-45's A-4Cs that was assigned to Detachment II aboard INTREPID. It is parked next to several of the ship's S2F Tracker anti-submarine aircraft. The flash on the fuselage, the fin cap, and the stars on the rudder are all black. (MAP)

Two Skyhawks, one from Detachment I and the other from Detachment II can be seen in this photograph. A blackbird is on the fuselage of the Detachment 1 aircraft, and a flash is on the side of the Skyhawk from DET II. Again, all markings are black. Note that both detachments were assigned to USS INTREPID. (Sides)

Later markings for VA-45 are illustrated on A-4E, 152097, and include a stylized blackbird on the fuselage. This photograph was taken on May 5, 1973, while the squadron was still assigned to INTREPID. (Sides)

This overall white TA-4J was assigned to VA-45, and photographed on August 5, 1973. It had a colorful tail marking, consisting of a red, yellow, and black (top to bottom) flash and a black band with two white stars at the top of the rudder. The nose and wing panels were green, outlined in black, as were the aft ends of the fuel tanks. The squadron badge was located on the side of the intake. The 000 modex and colorful tail marking indicates that this was a commander's aircraft.
(MacSorley)

This TA-4J, 154618, is also painted in special markings for the commander. It was photographed on August 10, 1974, at NAS Andrews, Maryland.
(Ostrowski)

Different markings and a different scheme are shown on this TA-4J that was photographed on April 30, 1978. This Skyhawk is in the gray over white scheme, and has a white ***VA-45*** *painted on a green flash on the vertical tail. The safety award painted on the nose consists of a white* ***S*** *on a green shield.* *(Flightleader)*

After taking on the role of adversaries, VA-45 camouflaged its aircraft as illustrated here. Blues and grays are used in the pattern on this TA-4J, and ***CDR M D TROUT COMMANDING OFFICER*** *is lettered in black under the forward end of the canopy rail.*
(Sides)

After becoming an adversary squadron, VA-45 was redesignated VF-45. Taken on October 10, 1987, this photograph illustrates one of the camouflage schemes used by this unit. The A-4E is painted in a colorful sky blue and light gray scheme, and has a Soviet style nose number that is red, outlined in yellow. A red star, also outlined in yellow is on the vertical tail. *(Flightleader)*

This TA-4J is also quite colorful in its dark green and sand camouflage, and it was photographed on March 26, 1987. At right is a close-up of the markings on the tail. As was the case with the aircraft shown above, the nose number and star on the tail were red, outlined in yellow. The tail code, ***NAVY,*** *and national insignia were all flat black, and the other markings were the sand color on the green portions of the camouflage.* *(Both Flightleader)*

Painted in an overall light gray scheme, and having very little in the way of colorful markings, this TA-4J, 154298, is still quite attractive. ***VF-45*** *is stencilled in tiny letters between the aircraft type and its BuNo on the aft section of the fuselage. Note the subdued* ***AD*** *tail code.* *(Grove)*

VA-46 CLANSMEN

The Clansmen of VA-46 were known for their plaid markings, some of which are illustrated here on the tail and fuselage of A-4B, 144930. Although quite attractive, these markings must have been difficult to paint and maintain. This is the CAG aircraft from the squadron, and it was photographed at its shore base, NAS Cecil Field, Florida. *(Sides)*

VA-55 WAR HORSES

Above: These two A-4Fs illustrate the colorful markings used by the War Horses of VA-55. The markings are dark green, and are outlined in white. This photograph was taken in April 1974, while the squadron was assigned to USS HANCOCK, CVA-19. HANCOCK was the last ESSEX class carrier retired from service except for LEXINGTON, which remained as the training carrier.
(Flightleader)

Left: Details of the War Horses' unit insignia are illustrated in this close-up. The checks around the disc are green and white, and are outlined in black. The water is blue with white waves, and the sky is a lighter blue. The sea horse is white with yellow wings, and the fire from its mouth and from the missile is red and yellow. ***ATKRON 55*** *is green on a white scroll, and the missile is white with a red nose.* *(Flightleader)*

VA-56 CHAMPIONS

The Champions of VA-56 used A-4C, 147683, as one of their CAG aircraft. The segments of the rudder were painted in various colors for the CAG, and ***CAG CDR J. L. SHIPMAN*** *was painted on the fuselage under the windscreen.* ***VA-56*** *was lettered in black above* ***NAVY*** *on the fuselage, but otherwise there are no distinctive markings on this aircraft.*

(Flightleader)

VA-64 BLACK LANCERS

The black lance on the fuel tank, and the knight's helmet in the squadron insignia are representative of markings used by the Black Lancers of VA-64. Note the patriotic mural on the wall of the hangar deck in the background which is appropriate for the carrier USS INDEPENDENCE. *(MAP)*

VA-66 WALDOS

VA-66 flew A-4C, 147681, from USS INTREPID during the late 1960s. The rudder and lightning bolt on the fuselage were blue, and the Waldo's head was red, yellow, and white. A variation of the Tonkin Gulf Yacht Club insignia appears on this side of the tail, while the squadron insignia was in the same location on the opposite side.

(Flightleader)

The blue squadron color remained the same, but the tail code changed to ***AA*** *when VA-66 was reassigned to USS FORRESTAL. The Waldo's head is no longer on the side of the intake.*

(Flightleader)

VA-76 FIGHTING SPIRITS

These were the markings used by the Fighting Spirits of VA-76 in March 1965. Although the squadron was assigned to the air wing aboard USS ENTERPRISE, this aircraft is shown being loaded aboard USS AMERICA as that carrier prepared for its first at-sea air operations off the Virginia Capes. (U.S. Navy)

VA-81 BRAVOS

Carrying the colors of VA-81, A-4B, 144951, was photographed on the deck of USS ESSEX, CVS-9, on September 16, 1961. The markings on the rudder are red and black, as are the fuselage band and flash on the nose. (MAP)

*With a green flash and on its tail, VA-81's CAG aircraft takes the barrier aboard USS ORISKANY, CVA-34, while the carrier was operating in the Gulf of Tonkin on November 29, 1967. The tip of the rudder is green, and **USS ORISKANY** is lettered on the side of the fuselage. However, it is almost obscured by the barrier. The tail code has been changed to **AH** and is in black letters. (U.S. Navy)*

*Less than a year later, on November 22, 1968, VA-81 was aboard USS JOHN F. KENNEDY, CVA-67. The fin flash is red with a black outline, and the new tail code is a black **AB.** (U.S. Navy)*

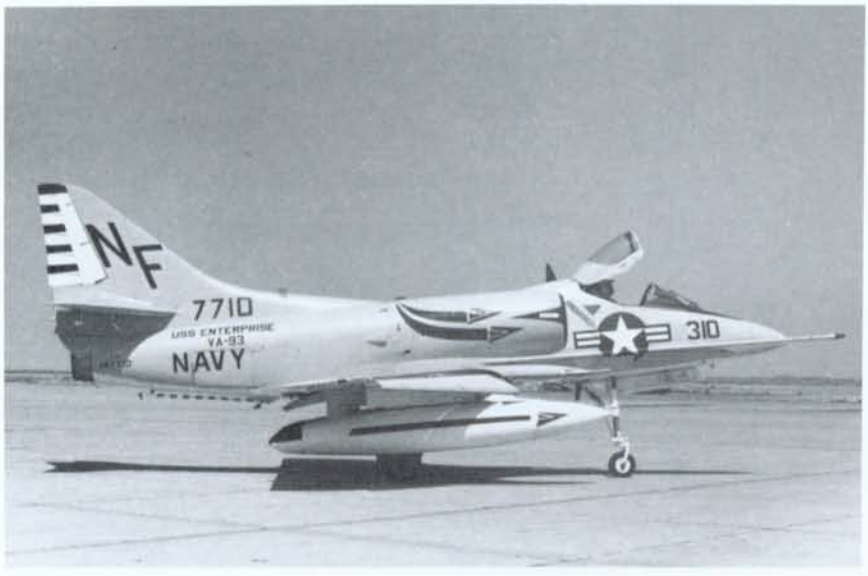
VA-83 RAMPAGERS

This A-4C, 147806, was assigned to the Rampagers of VA-83, and was photographed in 1961. The squadron's markings consisted only of blue diamonds painted on the rudder. Additionally, a blue flash has been painted on the fuel tanks. ***USS FORRESTAL SIXTH FLEET*** *was stencilled on the sides of the fuselage. (MAP)*

Four years later in 1965, VA-83 was still using the same markings on the rudder and was still assigned to FORRESTAL'S air wing. The markings on the fuel tanks had changed, but were still blue. By the time this photograph was taken, VA-83 had transitioned to the A-4E. (MAP)

VA-93 BLUE BLAZERS

VA-93 was assigned to the air wing aboard USS HANCOCK when this photograph was taken in 1966. Markings on the rudder and fin cap were blue, as was the arrowhead in the marking on the fuel tank. The streak on the tank was red. ***NAVY*** *is located on the vertical tail rather than in its normal position on the aft fuselage. (MAP)*



The Blue Blazers moved from HANCOCK to ENTERPRISE, and changed their markings as shown here. Blue is still used on the rudder as before, but red and blue squadron markings have been added to the fuselage. Note that ***NAVY*** *has been moved to its more usual position on the aft fuselage. (Flightleader)*

VA-94 SHRIKES

A-4C, 147681, was assigned to VA-94, and illustrates some of the unit's earlier Skyhawk markings. The fin cap and squadron markings on the fuselage are red, and the scores of mission markings attest to the hours this aircraft spent in the skies over Vietnam. These missions were flown from USS ENTERPRISE. (Flightleader)

VA-94 later transitioned to the A-4F, and embarked aboard USS BON HOMME RICHARD. These colors and markings are similar to those above except that the national insignia has been moved to the aft fuselage, and ***NAVY*** *has been relocated to the base of the vertical tail. The style of the* ***NF*** *tail code has been changed, and is now shadowed in red. (Flightleader)*

VA-106 GLADIATORS

The Gladiators of VA-106 flew this A-4B from USS SHANGRI-LA, and it was photographed on the flight deck of that carrier on September 10, 1960. The markings on the rudder and the squadron markings on the fuselage were blue. The arrow on the fuselage was outlined in black. (MAP)

After transitioning to the A-4C and moving to USS INDEPENDENCE, CVA-62, the Gladiators changed their markings as illustrated here. The rudder and helmet are still blue, but the arrow is yellow with black outline. (MAP)

VA-127 & VFA-127 BATMEN & ROYAL BLUES

VA-127's markings were rather simple when this photograph was taken, and consisted of a black fin cap and black flash on the fuel tank. The squadron insignia was located on the side of the fuselage, and provides the only color in the unit's markings. (Flightleader)

The Batmen flew this TA-4F in 1974, and painted a variation of their squadron insignia on the fuselage. A white torch with a yellow flame was superimposed over a black bat's wing. The fin cap was black, and the Skyhawk was painted in the standard light gull gray over white scheme. (Flightleader)

*Another TA-4F, also photographed in 1974, but three months after the one shown in the picture immediately above, shows the addition of color to the tail. The white **NJ** tail code is painted on a black vertical tail, and the squadron insignia has returned to the fuselage. (Bergagnini)*

*A-4F, 154209, was photographed on November 13, 1975, and also has a black tail. The tail code, **21**, and diving hawk on the tail are light gull gray. (Brewer)*

*This overall white TA-4J was photographed at NAS Lemoore, and carried the squadron insignia on the fuselage. The close-up at right shows the markings under the canopy. **CAPT. J. A. HOMYAK USN** was stencilled under the canopy rail, and **COMFAIRLEMOORE** was lettered within a pennant below it. Also lettered in the pennant, but in a less permanent and official manner, was **A-4s FOREVER.** Note the bat in the insignia which is indicative of the squadron's nickname. The name was later changed to Royal Blues. (Both Flightleader)*

*TA-4J, 153681, was photographed in July 1977. The only squadron markings are the black vertical tail with the **NJ** tail code and the **VA 127** on the fuselage. (Lock)*

*A striking contrast to the TA-4Js shown above is this aircraft which is painted an overall dark charcoal gray. Markings are all a medium gray except for the **06** nose number and the new squadron insignia on the tail. This new insignia with its red star represents the unit's change to an adversary mission. However, at the time this photograph was taken, it was still designated VA-127 as indicated by the lettering on the side of the fuselage. (Flightleader)*

*Still designated VA-127, the squadron began painting its Skyhawks in typical adversary camouflage schemes. This TA-4J has brown and tan colors in its pattern, and a nose number and star on the vertical tail that are red with yellow outlines. The **S** safety award on the nose is also red with a yellow outline, but all other markings are gray. (Grove)*

*A sky blue and gray camouflage made for an unusual and colorful TA-4J. Note how the markings were contrasted with the background color over which they were painted. The star on the tail, the nose number, and the **S** provided the only color as far as the markings were concerned. (Grove)*

*Dark brown, sand, and dark green were the colors used on this Skyhawk, and the use of dark green markings over the brown and sand colors, along with the sand colored intake warning, made for an interesting paint scheme. The nose number, star, and **S** remained in the usual red with a yellow outline. (Grove)*

VA-144 ROAD RUNNERS

Like VA-36, VA-144 also used the nickname Road Runners. Two of their A-4Fs are shown here while making an approach to landing. The lightning bolts are red, and ***USS BON HOMME RICHARD*** *is stencilled on the avionics hump on the aircraft in the background. (Picciani Aircraft Slides)*

VA-146 BLUE DIAMONDS

The Blue Diamonds of VA-146 are represented by A-4C, 149575. The fin cap is blue, and usually the diamonds on the rudder would also be blue. However, since this is the CAG aircraft for the squadron, the diamonds on this Skyhawk are various colors for the CAG. ***CITY OF FRESNO*** *is lettered on the intake. (Flightleader)*

VA-152 WILD ACES

This A-4E illustrates the CAG markings used by VA-152 in 1969, two years before the squadron was decommissioned. The ace on the fuel tank is black, and the flash is yellow. The fin cap is also yellow, and the squadron insignia is on the side of the fuselage. (MAP)

VA-155 SILVER FOXES

Green markings adorn this A-4F that belongs to the Silver Foxes of VA-155. The carrier name ***USS RANGER*** *indicates the unit's assignment aboard CVA-61. (Flightleader)*

VA-164 GHOST RIDERS

This photograph of A-4C, 151194, illustrates early markings used by VA-164 on their Skyhawks. The top of the rudder, the flash on the vertical tail, and the markings on the fuel tank are red. ***USS HANCOCK*** *is stencilled on the side of the fuselage in black.* *(Flightleader)*

Armed with 500-pound bombs and Bullpup missiles this A-4E, 151194, is shown inbound to targets in Vietnam on November 21, 1967. At this time, VA-164 was flying from the USS ORISKANY, CVA-34. *(U.S. Navy)*

The Ghost Riders had transitioned to the A-4F, and had been reassigned to the air wing aboard HANCOCK, when this photograph was taken on June 24, 1974. A red flash was added to the avionics hump. *(Bergagnini)*

The squadron's CAG aircraft is illustrated in these two photographs. The markings are the same as on the aircraft shown in the color photograph above, but multi-colored markings have been added to the rudder for the CAG. They are (from top to bottom) red, white, yellow, white, blue, white, red-orange, white, and black. The close-up at right shows these tail markings in better detail. *(Both Grove)*

LADY JESSIE

VA-164 flew several A-4s named Lady Jessie. What appears to be the first Skyhawk to have been given this name is this A-4E, 152048. It is shown here as it appeared on February 3, 1967. ***LADY JESSIE*** *is stencilled in black letters on the nose of the aircraft, and* ***VA-164 USS ORISKANY*** *is lettered in black on the fuselage. (U.S. Navy)*

This A-4F, 155018, appears to have been the second Lady Jessie. It is shown here in flight with its tail hook down in preparation for making an arrested landing aboard HANCOCK. (U.S. Navy)

A-4F, 155022, was the best known of the A-4s that were named Lady Jessie. It is shown here on HANCOCK's number three elevator while the carrier was at Yokosuka, Japan, on August 19, 1973. (Nagakubo)

The opposite side of 155022 is seen here after an antenna fairing was added to its vertical tail. This photograph was taken in January 1976. (Grove)

VA-192 GOLDEN DRAGONS

The Golden Dragons of VA-192 are represented by this A-4F. The fin cap and flash on the fuselage are yellow, outlined in black. The noses of the fuel tanks are yellow, and have small yellow extensions with ***VA-192*** *lettered in them. The black* ***NM*** *tail code is shadowed in yellow. The squadron was assigned to the air wing aboard USS ORISKANY, CVA-34, when this photograph was taken in April 1969.*
(Munkasy collection)

VA-195 DAMBUSTERS

VA-195 was also one of the squadrons that flew from ORISKANY. This A-4E, 150083, illustrates their markings, which consist of a white and green bird's head on the top of the tail fin. The bird's beak was yellow, outlined in black. *(Flightleader)*

VA-203 BLUE DOLPHINS

VA-203 is a reserve squadron assigned to the Atlantic Fleet. The Blue Dolphins flew this A-4L in March 1973, and it illustrates the colors and markings used by that squadron throughout most of the time it flew the Skyhawk. Later, the words ***WORLD FAMOUS BLUE DOLPHINS*** *replaced* ***BLUE DOLPHINS*** *on the avionics hump.* *(Sides)*

VA-204 TERCI PELOS

VA-204 is another reserve squadron assigned to the Atlantic Fleet. This A-4L, 148611, was the unit's CAG aircraft in 1973. *(MAP)*

Another A-4L, 145078, was also a CAG aircraft, and it is shown here as it appeared in November 1976. Note the red snake on the electronics hump. The aircraft was being retired to the "boneyard" at Davis Monthan AFB, when this photograph was taken. *(Knowles)*

*VA-204's Bi-centennial markings are illustrated here. A red, white, and blue **76** with two stars was added to the fuselage, and can be seen in better detail in the close-up photograph at right.* *(Left Flightleader, right Sides)*

VA-205 GREEN FALCONS

Atlanta-based VA-205 is another of the Atlantic Fleet's reserve squadrons, and the markings it used in 1974 are shown on this A-4L. The unit's insignia, which includes a green falcon with a bomb, is on the fuselage, and the markings on the fuel tank are also green. (MAP)

This photograph is also dated 1974, and shows the green falcon painted further aft on the fuselage. A green flash has been added to the vertical fin, and the noses of the fuel tanks are also green. (Flightleader)

*Later markings are shown in these two photographs that are dated 1975. A green flash and the name **FALCONS** have been added to the electronics hump, as shown in the photograph at right. Green has also been added to the rudder. (Both Flightleader)*

VA-209 AIR BARONS

The Air Barons of VA-209 were yet another reserve squadron for the Atlantic Fleet that flew the A-4L. This photograph shows the unit's markings as they appeared in 1970. (MAP)

VA-212 RAMPART RAIDERS

With multi-colored checks at the top of its rudder, and a 300 modex, A-4F, 154997, served as VA-212's CAG aircraft. ***CDR JOE BARTH COM ATK CAR AIR WING 21*** *is stencilled under the canopy. Air Wing Twenty-One was assigned to USS HANCOCK. (Flightleader)*

The markings for the Rampart Raiders can be studied in greater detail in this large color photograph. Another one of the unit's Skyhawks can be seen on the front cover of this book. (Grove)

VA-216 BLACK DIAMONDS

The Black Diamonds of VA-216 naturally used black diamonds for their markings. These were positioned vertically on the rudder and on the side of the fuselage. This A-4B was photographed on the flight deck of USS SARATOGA, CV-60, one of the carriers assigned to the Atlantic Fleet.

(MAP)

*After reassignment to the Pacific Fleet, as indicated by the **NP** tail code, this A-4C served as VA-216's CAG aircraft. **COMMANDER CARRIER AIR WING TWENTY ONE** is stencilled on the fuselage side. Eleven mission markers are under the windscreen, and **CDR JACK MONGER** is stencilled below them. Multi-colored diamonds are on the rudder for the CAG.*

(Flightleader)

VA-303 GOLDEN HAWKS

Another CAG Skyhawk is shown here, but this one is assigned to the Golden Hawks of VA-303. Note the multi-colored stiffeners on the rudder. The aircraft was being retired at Davis Monthan AFB, Arizona, when this photograph was taken.

(Flightleader)

VA-304 FIREBIRDS

With multi-colored markings on its rudder, A-4C, 148525, shows reserve squadron VA-304's markings. This is a reserve squadron of the Pacific Fleet, and it used the typical stylized ***ND*** *tail code adopted by these reserve squadrons. The flash on the tail is red.*

(MAP)

VA-305 DRAGGERS

Another Pacific Fleet reserve squadron is VA-305, which was known as the Draggers when it was equipped with the A-4C. This is the CAG aircraft as it appeared in January 1971.

(Flightleader)

This photo of A-4C, 149600, illustrates the colors in VA-305's markings as used in April 1971 when the squadron turned in this version of the Skyhawk to the "boneyard."

(Flightleader)

VC-1 UNIQUE ANTIQUERS

VC-1's Skyhawks were among the most beautiful and colorful used by any of the A-4 squadrons in the Navy. All of the squadron's markings, including the multi-colored tail, are revealed in this color photograph taken in March 1980, at Barber's Point Naval Air Station. Another TA-4J from VC-1 is illustrated on the rear cover. *(Flightleader)*

Single seat A-4Es flown by VC-1 were not as colorful as the two-seaters, and wore the gray over white scheme. The fuselage band and markings were the same, but the tail markings only had a blue flash instead of the multi-colored markings seen above. *(Grove)*

This TA-4J was the commander's aircraft for VC-1, and is even more colorful than the aircraft illustrated at the top of the page. A fiftieth anniversary marking is on the fuselage, and probably is for the unit's (and the units in VC-1's lineage) fiftieth anniversary. At right is a close-up of this marking. *(Both Lock)*

VC-2 USUS UBIQUES

VC-2's black and white markings are illustrated in these two photographs. The aircraft shown at right is the commander's aircraft, and has ***COM FIT WING ONE*** *inscribed over the fuselage band. It also has additional markings on the fuel tanks.* ***CAPT BILL KNUTSON*** *is stencilled under the windscreen.* *(Left Sides, right Flightleader)*

By simply adding white and red fuselage bands aft of the existing band, VC-2 created Bi-centennial markings for its aircraft. This resulted in a very attractive and colorful Skyhawk. *(Ostrowski)*

These two TA-4Js illustrate VC-2's markings used on their two-seat Skyhawks. The one at left is in the standard markings on the all-white scheme, and the one at right illustrates the addition of the red fuselage band (also creating a white band) to form the Bi-centennial markings. *(Left Ostrowski, right Slowiak)*

VC-5 WORKHORSE OF THE FLEET

VC-5 often used extensive amounts of red and yellow in their markings, and this A-4B is no exception. Both the checks on the tail and the marking on the fuel tank are red and yellow, and the ***UE*** *tail code, which is black with a white shadow, is almost lost in the checks. (Sides)*

At left is an A-4E that was photographed at NAF Naha, Japan, on January 10, 1972. Note that the checkerboard design of red and yellow is now only on the rudder, and the marking on the fuel tank is yellow with a thin black outline. At right is a TA-4J with similar markings, except that the vertical tail ahead of the rudder is painted red. Also, there are no markings on the fuel tanks of this aircraft. (Left Nagakubo, right Roth)

Another variation of VC-5's markings are shown in this photograph that is dated May 18, 1981. Again, the red and yellow checkerboard is present, but it is in the form of a band across the vertical fin and rudder. The ***UE*** *tail code is above and below this band. (Nagakubo)*

VC-7 TALLY-HOERS

VC-7 also used red in its markings. This A-4C, 145118, was photographed in February 1974, and has a red vertical tail and rudder. There is a black fin cap at the top of the red area, and a thin black outline at the bottom. The ***UH*** *tail code is black with a white outline.* *(Flightleader)*

By July 1976, VC-7 had transitioned to the A-4F as shown here. The markings had completely changed from those seen above. Noteworthy are the red, white, and blue markings on the fuel tank, and the unit's name, ***REDTAILS*** *lettered on the tank.* *(Grove)*

VC-7 also operated the TA-4J as illustrated by these two photographs. Both the gray over white and overall white schemes were used, but the markings were the same in either case. The photograph at left was taken in December 1975, while the one at right was taken in June 1976. *(Left Leslie, right Lock)*

VC-8

Typical markings for VC-8 are illustrated in this photograph of TA-4J, 154618, that was taken in June 1976. The aircraft is in the overall white scheme with red wing panels and a red nose. The bird design on the tail is red with a black outline and eye, and the ***GF*** *tail code is black. (Flightleader)*

Another one of VC-8's TA-4Js is shown here as it appeared in April 1980, and it is in the light gull gray over white scheme. The tail markings are the same as those shown above, but a red, white, and blue fuselage band has been added. There are no red nose or wing panels on this aircraft. (Boyd)

VC-10 PROUD PELICANS

Bi-centennial marking for VC-10 are shown in this photograph of TA-4J, 154626, taken in August 1976. A red, white, and blue flash is on the tail, and the fuselage band is also painted in the same patriotic colors. Note the very unusual location of the word ***NAVY*** *on this aircraft and the one below. (Flightleader)*

Although this photograph was taken on August 5, 1978, this TA-4J still retains VC-10's Bi-centennial colors on an overall white scheme. The marking on the nose is blue with a flat black anti-glare panel, and the wing panels are red. (Flightleader)

VC-12

*In March 1974, VC-12's markings were rather simple and plain, but they still made for a rather attractive looking aircraft. Note that the **JY** tail code is blue with a white shadow.*
(Flightleader)

*By August 1975, when the photograph at left was taken, VC-12 had jumped the gun with its Bi-centennial markings. Note the red, white, and blue flash that covers the entire vertical tail, and the red, white, and blue band on the fuel tank. Similar markings were also used on the all-white TA-4J seen at right. In both cases the **JY** tail code is black, but notice how it is outlined with white where it extends into the red section of the tail markings on the aircraft at right.*
(Both Flightleader)

*After the Bi-centennial year, VC-12 retained its red, white, and blue colors but redesigned them. The new markings that were used on their commander's aircraft are illustrated here, and show a wide white tail band bordered by a thinner red band above it and a blue band below it. No other unit markings are on this gray over white TA-4J except for the **VC-12** on the aft fuselage.*
(Flightleader)

The more standard markings for the unit in the 1978 time frame are shown here. Red and blue segments in the rudder are alternated between the white segments. The squadron's insignia is on the fuselage, and consists of a blue disc with a thin black outline. A black aircraft leaves a curving red, white, and blue trail across the disc.
(Campbell)

VC-13 SAINTS

*The Saints of VC-13 are perhaps the best known and most photographed of all of the composite units that flew the Skyhawk. Their earlier and simpler markings are illustrated here, and consist only of two small blue flashes at the leading edge of the vertical tail, a blue **UX** tail code, and **VC-13** lettered in the same blue on the avionics hump. This photograph is dated June 1974.*
(Flightleader)

A-4L, 147825, illustrates the better known markings used for the Saints. The same blue was used as before, but more extensive use is made of it. The entire electronics hump, all of the vertical tail, except for the area around the tail code, the wing tips, and the arrows on the fuel tanks and nose gear door are all blue. All of these blue areas are outlined in black. Blue trim is on the small fences on the wing and leading edge slats, the vanes on the rudder, and the small tab at the base of the trailing edge of the rudder.
(Flightleader)

The same blue is seen again on this overall white TA-4J, which was photographed on July 16, 1977. Note the insignia on the fuselage, and its resemblance to the logo for the New Orleans Saints football team. Since VC-13 was once based in New Orleans, this may be no coincidence.
(Flightleader)

Taken in October 1982, this gray over white TA-4J shows a change in VC-13's markings. The only blue left on the aircraft is a flash on the vertical tail, and even the tail code has been changed from blue to black.
(Flightleader)

VF-101/VF-101KW & VF-171/VF-171KW GRIM REAPERS

VF-101 and its Key West Detachment provided adversary aircraft for dissimilar air combat training, using the Skyhawk and Phantom. This attractive Skyhawk was camouflaged in two shades of blue, and for the most part, retained colorful markings. It was photographed on September 12, 1972, and was operated by the parent unit, VF-101. *(Sides)*

The Key West Detachment flew the overall white TA-4J shown at left. It is painted with colorful markings that include a red, white, and blue fin flash and red stars on the rudder. At right is a more conventionally marked A-4E, which is painted in a medium green, sand, and earth brown camouflage pattern. The Key West Detachment's red, white, and blue insignia is on the side of the fuselage, as is the unit's designation. ***ACM*** *is lettered in black over the red and white vertical stripes of the shield.* *(Left Ostrowski, right Curry)*

After VF-101 and VF-101KW were redesignated VF-171 and VF-171KW respectively, they continued with their adversary mission. At left is an A-4E in the gray over white scheme with conventional markings that still include the unit's shield-like insignia on the fuselage. At right is a right side view of the same A-4E shown immediately above, but the shield has been removed from the fuselage. *(Detail & Scale collection)*

VF-126 FIGHTING SEAHAWKS

VF-126 is another unit with an adversary mission, and it is based next to the Navy's Fighter Weapons School at NAS Miramar, California. RADM L. A. Snead II flew this TA-4J from VF-126 while he was COMFITAEWWINGPAC.

(Roth)

RADM F. G. Fellowes was later COMFITAEWWINGPAC, and was assigned this rather plain looking TA-4J in April 1978. His name and position are written under the canopy rail in rather small lettering as compared to the far flashier TA-4J seen above.

(Flightleader)

This beautiful TA-4J, 154290, was completely repainted in red, white, and blue markings as VF-126's Bicentennial aircraft. *(Leslie)*

The adversary camouflage schemes on these two A-4s are more typical of VF-126's aircraft and mission. At right is an A-4E in brown, green, and tan, while the two-seater at right is painted in a brown and sand colored pattern.

(Both Kinzey)

NAVY FIGHTER WEAPONS SCHOOL "TOP GUN"

The most famous of all adversary units is the Navy Fighter Weapons School at NAS Miramar. "Top Gun" goes far beyond just being an adversary unit, but its aircraft are painted in typical adversary schemes. This is one of their earlier A-4Es, which is painted in brown, green and sand camouflage. Note the NFWS insignia on the fuselage. A single-digit number is on the tail to designate the aircraft within the unit. *(Muir)*

One of the more colorful schemes used on Top Gun aircraft is this tri-colored scheme of blues and a blue-gray. Except for the intake warning, markings are black and minimal, yet the Skyhawk is still colorful and attractive. The insignia for NFWS or Top Gun is missing from this aircraft, but a two-digit tail number is used. *(Flightleader)*

Dark gull gray, light gull gray, and a pale blue are the colors in the camouflage scheme on this A-4E. The Top Gun insignia is on the vertical tail, and most smaller markings are in color. By the time this photograph was taken in January 1976, NFWS was using three-digit tail numbers. *(Roth)*

By 1986, when these photographs were taken, Top Gun was using two digit nose numbers, but still did not use the large Soviet style numbers used by most other adversary units and on their own F-5s. The aircraft at left is number 55, and is painted in a green, brown, and tan camouflage scheme. The aircraft at right is painted in various shades of green. The only color in the markings include the red nose numbers, the NFWS insignia on the tail, and the gold parallelogram for the pilot's and crew chief's names below the canopy. *(Both Kinzey)*

CHIEF OF NAVAL TRAINING

We begin our look at Skyhawks used in the training role with the TA-4J once used by the Chief of Naval Training, CNATRA. The acronym CNATRA is pronounced much the same as the last name of a famous singer who has the first name of Frank! TA-4J, 155097, is in the overall white scheme with no unit markings. The fuselage band is blue with gold stripes and gold stars. ***CNATRA*** *is lettered through it in black. At right is a close-up of the markings under the canopy. The names and the* ***000*** *modex are blue, shadowed in gold.* *(Both Muir)*

RADM Burt Shepherd had become CNATRA when the same TA-4J shown above was photographed again in August 1977. The fuselage band has been removed, and a red ***C*** *with black shadowing has been added to the tail.* ***USS LEXINGTON,*** *the name of the Navy's training carrier, is lettered in black on the fuselage. The blue* ***000*** *modex with gold shadowing remains the same as shown in the top right photograph.* *(Roth)*

RADM Shepherd was still the Chief of Naval Training when TA-4J, 158712, was assigned to him. It is in the more traditional scheme used by the Navy's training units, and has the Naval Air Training Command insignia on the vertical tail. *(Barbier)*

In October 1979, TA-4J, 158712, was photographed again. At this time, RADM J. J. Barth, Jr.'s name appeared under the canopy rail. A white ***C,*** *that was shadowed in black, replaced the Naval Air Training Command insignia on the tail, and the fuselage band and the blue and gold colors on the rudder had been removed. A black stripe had been added near the top of the vertical tail and rudder.* *(Flightleader)*

VT-4

*VT-4 is represented by its CO's aircraft as photographed in October 1979. All nose, wing, and tail panels are red, and a black **F** appears on the vertical tail. **CDR MIKE SULLIVAN,** is on the canopy rail, and **COMMANDING OFFICER** is located just above the **300** modex. (Ostrowski)*

VT-7

*VT-7 is part of Carrier Training Wing One (CTW-1), and this is the wing commander's aircraft, TA-4J, 158131, as it appeared on March 29, 1986. **CAPT. VINCE HUTH USN** is lettered on the canopy rail, and **"CTW-1"** is below it on the fuselage. Noteworthy are the special wing commander's markings on the fuel tank. (Flightleader)*

*A different TA-4J, 158137, was the wing commander's aircraft in May 1987, when the photograph at left was taken aboard USS LEXINGTON. Again, note the special wing commander's marking on the fuel tank, which is the CTW-1 insignia within the red and black stripes. The name **BLITZ** appears on the forward canopy rail. At right is the squadron commander's aircraft, experiencing a bolter aboard LEXINGTON on the same day. It has a black and red eagle on the fuel tank, and the name **TAZ** on the forward canopy rail. A cartoon-like character of TAZ is just below the name. Both aircraft have **VT-7** stencilled in black within the fuselage band, and **USS LEXINGTON** and **CTW-1** stencilled in smaller letters just aft of the band. Aircraft that are painted in special markings for commanding officers are flown regularly by other pilots, and this was the case when these photographs were taken. (Both Kinzey)*

TA-4J, 158097, was yet another Skyhawk painted in special markings for the commander of CTW-1. ***CAPT. C. RAY SMITH USN*** *is stencilled in black below the canopy, and a special marking with a black* ***COMTRAWING*** *and a reddish brown* ***1*** *is painted on the side of the fuselage. The rudder is divided into red and black segments, and note that there are no special markings on the fuel tank of this aircraft.*

(Swanberg)

VT-7 painted TA-4J, 158130, in these beautiful red, white, and blue Bi-centennial markings. It has to be one of the most attractive of all Bi-centennial schemes seen on any aircraft. *(Swanberg)*

Another very colorful and beautiful paint scheme was applied to TA-4J, 158473, in celebration of Naval Aviation's seventy-fifth anniversary. The aircraft is shown here as it taxied out for take-off on May 3, 1986. This large color photograph shows all of the markings to good effect. *(Flightleader)*

VT-21

*With typical red markings on the overall white scheme, VT-21's markings included a stylized red, gold, and black bird on the fuselage. When this photograph was taken in September 1974, the unit was using **3E** as its tail code. (Flightleader)*

No tail code is on this aircraft, which was assigned to VT-21's commanding officer. Three red flashes appear on the tail, and are representative of the bird's tail feathers. (Flightleader)

*Unlike the two Skyhawks seen above, TA-4J, 156898, is painted in the light gull gray over white scheme and has a black **B** on the tail. The fin cap is red. (Rogers)*

*Although it has no special markings other than the **100** modex, this aircraft has **CAPT. J. W. TAYLOR** stencilled in black below the canopy rail. **COMTRAWING TWO** is lettered below his name, and a pennant with a **2** is beside it. This photograph is dated August 6, 1983. (Flightleader)*

VT-22

*A white **3F** tail code on a red tail indicates that this TA-4J was assigned to VT-22 in June 1973. The squadron's badge and designation are on the fuselage, but otherwise, these markings are standard for the training squadrons. (Flightleader)*

*TA-4J, 156945, was painted in special markings for CAPT J. E. Russ, who was the commanding officer of Training Wing Two when this photograph was taken on January 10, 1976. His name and title are stencilled in black under the canopy rail and just aft of the **200** modex. The **B** on the tail is black, and the fin cap is yellow with a white and black border. A yellow fuselage stripe has been added, and it has a black outline. (Flightleader)*

*VT-22's standard markings are shown in this photograph that is dated October 1977. Typical red markings are on the nose, wings, and tail, and the units black **B** tail code is in evidence. The rudder is yellow with black trim, and the names of the pilot and plane captain are black on yellow rectangles which are bordered in black. (Grove)*

*TA-4J, 158085, was painted in this striking blue and gold scheme in honor of Naval Aviation's seventy-fifth anniversary. It was photographed on May 9, 1986. **CDR J L Thorsen** is lettered in gold script on the canopy rail, and **executive officer** is written just below it. (Flightleader)*

VT-24

*Standard markings used by VT-24 are revealed in this photograph which is dated October 1973. A black **3K** tail code is on the red area of the vertical tail, and **TOP QUALITY** is lettered in small black letters under the **VT-24** on the fuselage.* *(Flightleader)*

*By April 1976, the markings used by VT-24 had changed to those shown here. An red-orange **C** with a black shadow had replaced the former 3K tail code. A red flash can be seen around the standard intake warning. The **409** modex is red-orange with black shadowing.*

(Rotramel)

*A red, white, and blue banner with **COMMANDER TRAINING WING THREE** was added to the fuselage both as a Bi-centennial marking in 1976, and as part of the special markings for CTW-3's CO. Two red-orange mechanical nuts were on the fin cap, and the segments of the rudder were multi-colored for the commander.*

(Sides)

*VT-24 also painted one of their Skyhawks in special markings for the celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of Naval Aviation. The gold lettering on the fuselage side reads **75 Years of Naval Aviation. EXECUTIVE OFFICER** is stencilled on the canopy rail, and **CDR TERRY I. ANDERSON** is on the fuselage below it. Notice the **VT-24 BOBCATS** that is lettered in gold on the fuel tank.* *(Leader)*

VT-25

*A black **3J** tail code was used by VT-25 in June 1974. The segments in the rudder are green, but otherwise the standard red markings on a white scheme are used on this aircraft.*
(Muir)

*The commander of Training Wing Three was assigned this aircraft from VT-25 in May 1977. A green **C** had replaced the 3J tail code seen above, and the markings on the fuel tanks are also green. **COMTRAWING THREE** is lettered in black on the fuselage side.*
(Leader)

*In 1984, TA-4J, 158712, was the commander's aircraft. Noteworthy is the stylized **VT-25** on the fuselage side.*
(Grove)

VT-86

VT-86 flew this A-4C, which was one of a relative few single-seat Skyhawks flown by training unit. (Flightleader)

*Standard training markings are used on the TA-4J, shown at left, and the squadron's insignia is on the nose. A black **AB** tail code is on the red area on the tail, and the leading edge and vanes of the rudder are black. This photograph is dated August 1974. Similar markings are seen on the Skyhawk at right, however, the entire rudder is black, and the tail code is now a black **F**. This photograph was taken in mid-1988. (Left Flightleader, right Kinzey)*

Another one of VT-86's TA-4Js is shown here, and it too would not qualify as a colorful paint scheme, but it is interesting and different. (Campbell)

VAQ-33 NIGHT HAWKS

Red, yellow, and black markings were used by VAQ-33 on this EA-4F, which was painted in the standard light gull gray over white scheme. The squadron insignia is on the nose, and a black **GD** *tail code is on either side of the unit's tail markings.* *(Stewart)*

These two close-ups show VAQ-33's markings in greater detail. At left are the tail markings, which consist of a red stylized bird with a yellow lightning bolt. At right is the unit's designation which is painted on the side of the fuselage. It is black with a red shadow. *(Both Leader)*

RVAH-3 DRAGONS

RVAH-3, which flew the RA-5C Vigilante, operated this TA-4J as a utility aircraft. It was photographed at NAS Key West, and carries the unit's usual **GJ** *tail code. Otherwise, standard training markings are used.* *(Rhodes)*

VX-4 EVALUATORS

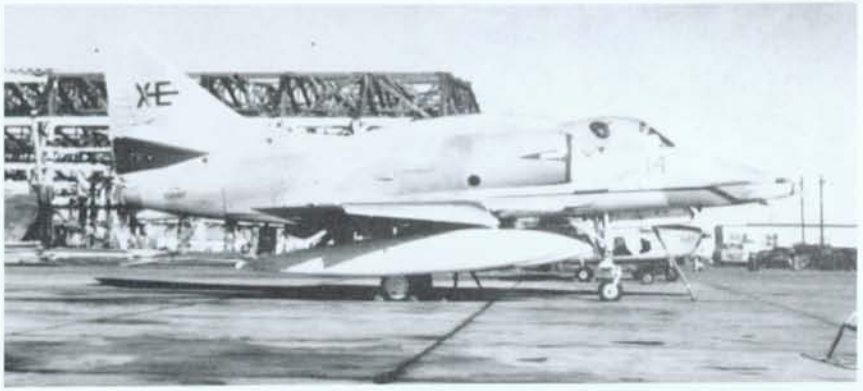
A shark's mouth and eyes were painted on this TA-4J which was in the light gull gray over white scheme. It carried standard markings used by VX-4 on its various types of aircraft was photographed in March 1976. ***OPERATIONAL TEST AND EVALUATION FORCE*** *is lettered in black on the fuselage. (Grove)*

Another Skyhawk from VX-4 is shown here in a brown, light green, and sand camouflage similar to that used by the Israeli Air Force. Markings are minimal, and include the unit's ***XF*** *tail code in black with a white shadow.* ***VX-4*** *is painted in black on the aft fuselage, and the nose number is black, shadowed in white. (Flightleader)*

Taken on March 11, 1978, this photograph shows VX-4's dark blue band with white stars and a thin red outline. The ***XF*** *tail code and* ***VX-4*** *on the aft fuselage are the unit's only other markings on this aircraft. (Leader)*

VX-5 VAMPIRES

*Like VX-4, VX-5 used very little in the way of special markings on their aircraft. The white **XE** tail code is located on a green tail band which is bordered with white stripes. The unit's designation, **VX-5,** is just above the national insignia. (Lock)*



*Only a black **XE** tail code indicates that this A-4M belongs to VX-5. The aircraft is painted a three tone blue and blue-gray camouflage scheme. (Rogers)*

*A brown, green, and tan camouflage pattern is painted on this TA-4J, which carries only a black **XE** tail code and **VX-5** to indicate its unit. It was photographed on April 6, 1975. (Flightleader)*

*In July 1978, A-4M, 159471, was photographed in the light gull gray over white scheme. The **XE** tail code is white on a green band, and **VX-5** is lettered in black on the fuselage. VX-5 is a Navy unit, but some of its aircraft carry the word **MARINES** on the side, because the Marines are involved with the evaluation work of the test units. (Picciani)*

NAS MINNEAPOLIS

*Prior to the reorganization of the Naval Reserve in the 1970-71 time frame, Reserve Air Wings (RAW) were located at a considerable number of Naval Air Stations. The **7E** tail code on this A-4B indicates that it was assigned to RAW-81 at NAS Minneapolis, Minnesota. The nose and tail are painted a red-orange that appears to be quite worn. The badge on the fuselage has **NAS TWIN CITIES** painted on it in gold. (Picciani)*

NAS DALLAS

*Many Naval Air Stations retained their utility aircraft after the reserve reorganization. The **7D** tail code on this TA-4J indicates its assignment to NAS Dallas, Texas, where RAW-70 had formerly used this code. The leading edge of the rudder is red, and the segments are blue. Combined with the white area and vanes, this makes for an attractive red, white, and blue tail marking. However, there are no other distinctive markings on this Skyhawk. (Grove)*

NAS NEW ORLEANS

*TA-4J, 155083, is in standard training markings, and has a **7X** tail code indicating its assignment to NAS New Orleans. RAW-82 had formerly used this code on its aircraft when it operated from New Orleans. (Flightleader)*

NAS JACKSONVILLE

*RAW-74 was formerly based at NAS Jacksonville, Florida, and used the **6F** tail code. This TA-4J was still at Jacksonville in 1976, and was painted in beautiful Bi-centennial markings on the nose, wing, and tail. (Fisher)*

NAS ALAMEDA

*NAS Alameda, California, was the former home of RAW-87, which used the **6G** tail code seen on this Skyhawk. The markings on the fuel tank are red, and the tail markings are red, white, and blue for America's Bi-centennial celebration in 1976. (Grove)*

This close-up shows the tail markings to better effect. (Grove)

NAS ATLANTA

*Wearing standard markings carried by Skyhawks used in the training role, this TA-4J has a **7B** tail code indicating its assignment to NAS Atlanta, Georgia. RAW-67 had formerly made its home in Atlanta, and had used this tail code. (Flightleader)*

*Red, white, and blue markings were painted on TA-4J, 155072, by NAS Atlanta as their contribution to the Bi-centennial celebration of 1976. All lettering, including the small **TA-4J** and **155072** are red and blue, as is **NAS ATLANTA** and **SPIRIT OF 76** on the fuselage. There is a small white break between the red and blue. (Leader)*

The opposite side of the same TA-4J is shown here, and it reveals the Bi-centennial markings applied to the left side of the aircraft. (Flightleader)

*These two close-ups show details of the Bi-centennial markings. At left is the forward fuselage revealing the markings on the nose, intake, fuel tank, and on the aft section of the canopy. The top half of the **072** is red, and the lower half is blue. Crew names are red. At right is the aft fuselage. The top half of all lettering is red, and the bottom half is blue. The **7** is red and the **B** is blue. (Both Flightleader)*

NAVAL AIR TEST CENTER

The Skyhawk was a workhorse at the Naval Air Test Center for many years. This A-4B was photographed in August 1968, and displays NATC's markings as of that date. *(Picciani)*

Painted in similar markings and colors as the A-4B above, the A-4F at left was photographed in April 1972. Rather than having lettering on the fuselage like the A-4B, this aircraft has the NATC Flight Test insignia on its nose. At right is a close-up of the insignia. It is a blue disc with a yellow outline. The lettering is white, as is the inner circle, and the flash is red. *(Both Sides)*

*The stylized **S** on the tail of the A-4F at left indicates that it was assigned to the Systems Test Directorate at NATC. At right is an A-4E with a white **W** on the tail. This indicates its use with the Weapons Test Directorate.*
(Left Picciani, right Sides)

The NA-4F designation has been assigned to this Skyhawk, which wears the NATC insignia on its fuselage. (Flightleader)

*The insignia on the tail of this NTA-4F reads **NAVAL AIR TEST CENTER** at the top, and **STRIKE AIRCRAFT TEST** at the bottom. (Zink)*

*An unusual black and white scheme was applied to A-4M, 158148, making it one of the most unusually marked aircraft ever operated by the Center. At left is a right side view of the aircraft as photographed on September 24, 1976. NATC's insignia is on the tail, and **NAVAL AIR TEST CENTER** is lettered in black on the side of the fuselage. At right is the other side of the same aircraft as it appeared on February 21, 1975, shortly after it was transferred from the Naval Weapons Evaluation Facility. NWEF's logo is still on the vertical tail, but NATC's insignia has been added to the fuselage. Another photograph of this aircraft appears on page 63. (Both Flightleader)*

A-4M, 155049, is unusual in that it has NATC's colorful nose and tail markings on the tactical paint scheme. These include the NATC badge on this side of the vertical tail. This is another Marine aircraft that is operated by the Naval Air Test Center, and it was photographed in October 1982. *(Ostrowski)*

This TA-4J was photographed on October 24, 1984, and wears the tactical scheme with Navy markings. NATC's colors and markings are the same as shown on the A-4M above, except that the Strike Aircraft Test badge is on this side of the tail. *(Flightleader)*

A-4M, 158425, is still in the light gull gray over white scheme, and this angle shows the red wing panels and gray walkways to good effect. *(Spering/A.I.R.)*

NAVAL TEST PILOT SCHOOL

Like the Naval Air Test Center, the Naval Test Pilot School is located at Patuxent River, Maryland. Their markings are also quite similar to those used by NATC as illustrated on the previous three pages. This TA-4J was photographed on April 24, 1978. It is in the gray over white scheme with red-orange nose, wing, and tail panels, but the only marking that indicates its assignment is ***US NAVAL TEST PILOT SCHOOL*** *lettered on the fuselage in black. (Miller)*

The Naval Test Pilots School's insignia has been added to the vertical tail of this TA-4J, but otherwise the markings are similar to those seen on the Skyhawk above. This photograph is dated May 4, 1981. (Flightleader)

TA-4J, 158126, was photographed on October 7, 1985, wearing the tactical scheme and red-orange nose, wing, and tail panels. The School's badge is on the tail. Note the gray extending into the red-orange nose section that serves as an anti-glare panel. (Flightleader)

NAVAL AIR DEVELOPMENT CENTER

The Naval Air Development Center at Warminster, Pennsylvania, flew this NA-4C. The colors in the tail marking are difficult to describe, but the disc seems to be black, and it appears that there is a stylized ***NL*** *within the disc. Within the base of the* ***L,*** *the letters* ***NADC*** *are stencilled in red. All other markings are standard for the light gull gray over white scheme.* *(Picciani)*

The flash on the tail of this NA-4F is black with ***NADC*** *lettered in white inside of it.* ***NAVAL AIR DEVELOPMENT CENTER*** *is in black on the fuselage. Red-orange panels are painted on the nose, wings, and tail. A small eye is painted in the red area just in front of the modex. Evidently, the white radome underneath the nose is intended to be the mouth.* *(Stewart)*

NAVY PARACHUTE TEST CENTER

The Navy Parachute Test Center flew this all-white TA-4J in March 1978 when this photograph was taken. The only distinctive marking was the yellow flash on the tail which was outlined in black. *(Logan)*

NAVAL AIR TEST FACILITY

The Naval Air Test Facility is located at Lakehurst, New Jersey, and its markings are on this NA-4B. The red fuel tanks are unusual, and appear to be well worn. (Flightleader)

Different markings for NATF are seen on this A-4C. The insignia on the tail consists of a white disc that is outlined in red. The flash is also red, and ***NATF*** *and* ***LAKEHURST*** *are lettered in black. (Flightleader)*

NAVAL AIR ENGINEERING CENTER

The Naval Air Engineering Center is also at Lakehurst where this A-4L was photographed in March 1978. The fin cap is red, and ***NAEC*** *and* ***LAKEHURST*** *are black. The flash on the tail is yellow and black. (Leslie)*

NAVAL MISSILE CENTER

In October 1973, the Naval Missile Center flew this A-4E. Markings used by the Center at that time are illustrated, and include red and blue flashes with the NMC insignia positioned within it. ***NMC*** *is lettered in red below it. Note the unusual position of* ***MARINES*** *on the fuselage, indicating that this was one of several USMC aircraft used by the Center.*

(Flightleader)

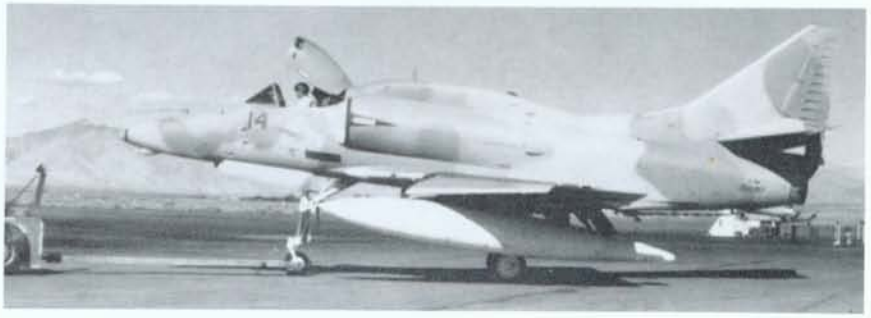
PACIFIC MISSILE TEST CENTER

The Pacific Missile Test Center at Point Mugu, California, has flown both single and two-seat versions of the Skyhawk. This is an A-4M as photographed in November 1978. The unit's blue tail band and insignia is in evidence, and ***PMTC*** *is lettered in black above it.* *(Flightleader)*

TA-4J, 152872, was one of the two-seat Skyhawks used by the Pacific Missile Test Center. The Center's markings are more easily seen in this view. *(Rogers)*

CHINA LAKE

China Lake, California, is the home of the Naval Weapons Center. This A-4F, minus its usual avionics hump, shows the Center's markings as of May 9, 1970. (Lock)



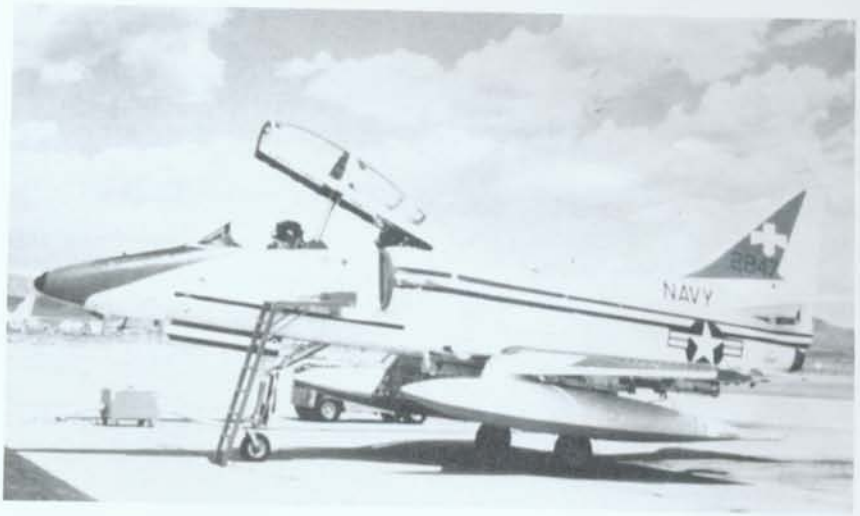
*A colorful camouflage scheme of two blues and a gray was applied to this A-4M that was stationed at China Lake in October 1975. However, the black **14** on the nose was the only non-standard marking on the aircraft. All other markings are simply basic stenciling for the Skyhawk, and they are in the usual colors used on the light gull gray over white scheme. (Logan)*

*With red-orange nose, wing, and tail panels, this NA-4F looks more the part of a test and evaluation aircraft. **CHINA LAKE** is lettered on the tail in black. This photograph was taken on November 13, 1977. (Leader)*

*TA-4Js were also used at China Lake. This overall white Skyhawk has the typical red markings found on training aircraft and has **CHINA LAKE** in black on the tail. The radome is medium gray. (Lock)*

NAVAL WEAPONS EVALUATION FACILITY

By taking a TA-4J in standard markings used by training units, and adding their white logo to the tail, two black stripes to the fuselage, and another stripe to the lower nose section, the Naval Weapons Evaluation Facility came up with these markings for one of its aircraft in June 1974. (Muir)



This is the same A-4M that was later transferred to the Naval Air Test Center and which is illustrated with that unit on page 56. Other than the BuNo, the one marking on the aircraft is the NWEF logo on the tail. The only colors used on the aircraft are black and white. (Flightleader)

A single black stripe is on the fuselage of this TA-4J, and the insignia, rather than the logo, for NWEF is in the red portion of the tail. (Grove)

This close-up reveals the details of the insignia for NWEF. The disc portion of the insignia is yellow with a black outline. What appears to be electrons in their orbits are painted red within the disc, and the bird-like logo is black. ***NAV.WPN.EVAL.FAC.*** *is stencilled in black. Note how the red area has been painted over a portion of the* ***NWEF*** *on this side, but not on the left side shown above. (Leader)*

BLUE ANGELS

The Navy's flight demonstration team flew the A-4F beginning in 1973 when it replaced its F-4J Phantoms for economy reasons. The yellow markings used on its blue Skyhawks never changed throughout the entire time the Blues flew the A-4F and a single TA-4J. This is the leader's aircraft during the last year the Blue Angels flew the A-4 before changing to the F/A-18 Hornet. *(Kinzey)*

FLIGHT SYSTEMS, INC.

Flight Systems, Inc. is a private corporation that has flown several types of aircraft in support of the military for quite a few years. This A-4C was photographed on November 13, 1977, and displays the company's typical medium blue markings on an overall white aircraft. *(Leader)*

This A-4L has an electronics hump, but that is about the only difference from the aircraft shown above. It was photographed at Mojave on August 27, 1985. *(Kaston)*

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